



Fraud Newsletter

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Sheriff Steve Mansfield

Fraud and ID Theft Information – to Better Protect the Residents of Lewis County

*"If it's too good to be true
it normally is"*

Fraud is simply a theft by trick. It can take the form of chain letters that claim huge amounts of cash to those that send money in or people that claim they will provide a service and never do.

Identity theft and identity fraud are terms used to refer to all types of crimes in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in a way that involves fraud or deception for economic gain. This newsletter is intended to keep the public informed of the most recent fraud schemes happening in our county. It will also provide resources to help you take precautions to protect yourself from these vicious crimes.

PROTECT YOUR ID

- 1** Always know who you are providing personal information to
- 2** If you use passwords to access accounts make sure to change them often
- 3** Never provide personal information in response to any unsolicited offer
- 4** Know the company that you are dealing with when making online purchases

Current Scams and Frauds Hitting Lewis County

Lottery Prize Scams

Unsolicited mail from companies that claim to be holding a large lottery prize for you. The letter will state that you have won in an international lottery and that they will be sending you additional information about your good fortune. The initial letter will often ask for you to contact a representative in Canada to make further arrangements concerning the collection of your winnings. The follow-up letter will include a check made out to you with instructions to cash the check and return a portion to cover the required taxes. The check will be drawn on the account of a company in the US. The check is a forgery and it's all a scam to steal your money.

Medicare Beneficiaries Urged to Be on the Look-Out for Phone Scams

Seniors and people with disabilities should be aware of a scheme that asks Medicare beneficiaries for money and checking account information to help them enroll in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. No Medicare drug plan representative can ask a person with Medicare for bank account or other personal information over the telephone.

"Internet fraud is the fastest growing crime in the US"

New Twist on an Old Email Scam

Unsolicited offers from people outside the US offering money to anyone that will assist in the transfer of funds to people living in the US. The initial contact is by Email and offers 10% of the money sent to the person assisting in the transfer. Then comes the company check via FedEx with instructions to cash the check, deduct the 10% handling fee, then obtain a money order, and forward the funds per their instructions. Later it is learned the company check is a forgery and the victim is out the whole amount.

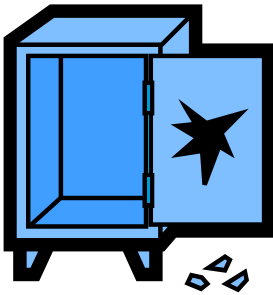
Email ID Thefts

Email from a company you may do business with that indicates someone has attempted entry into your account. It then asks you to go to a website and verify your account information to re-activate your account. The website will initially ask you to enter your account and password information. The web page is a fake and is only there to steal your account and ID information. The key point to look at is the first Email - it is not address to you, but to "Dear Customer." Remember, the companies you do business with know you by name. Create a customized template

Match Making Services

This one starts out with you joining an internet service. Someone will send you an email and the relationship builds from there. The person that you are communicating with is often in a foreign country. The offer is made by that person to come visit you, but they need some money to help pay the costs. They will be more than willing to pay you back once they are in the US. You send your money with the hope that you and your new friend will soon be together. Something will come up and the person will not make the flight. You will often be sent a follow up email from someone that claims to be a police officer or a lawyer that can fix the problem for a fee. It is all a scam and the only thing that you get is a smaller bank account.

"Vigilance is the only real protection against Internet fraud"



The internet is a powerful tool that is used by both legitimate businesses and scam artists alike. Always take steps to protect yourself and your personal information as you would protect your home or car.

Other Resources

The Federal Trade Commission - <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>

The FBI Fraud Information page - <http://www.fbi.gov/maajcases/fraud/fraudschemes.htm>

The Federal Citizen Information Center - <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/scamsdesc.htm>

Lewis County Sheriff's Office

360-748-9286

Lewis County Sheriff's Office Mission Statement

To make a positive difference for members of our community by seeking and finding ways to affirmatively promote, preserve and deliver a feeling of security, safety and quality service



*Sheriff Steven Mansfield
Committed to make a difference.*